
Manner: ACCIDENT

Four hundred seventy-two (472) deaths were certified as non-traffic accidents for calendar year 2002. The largest group of these deaths were individuals who died as a result of accidental overdoses of drugs and/or poisons, representing 37% (173/472). The largest percentage of these accidental drug deaths, 36% (63/173) were between the ages of 40-49 years. The second largest group, 30% (52/173) included adults between 30-39 years. Twenty percent (34/173) were adults between the ages of 50-59. Two accidental drug deaths were between the ages of 16-19 years. This 2002 drug rate number (173) represents a 40% increase compared to the 124 accidental drug deaths in 2001, and represents a 3% decrease from the 179 accidental drug deaths that occurred in 2000. A more detailed discussion of these deaths is presented in the section "Death Due to Drugs and Poisons".

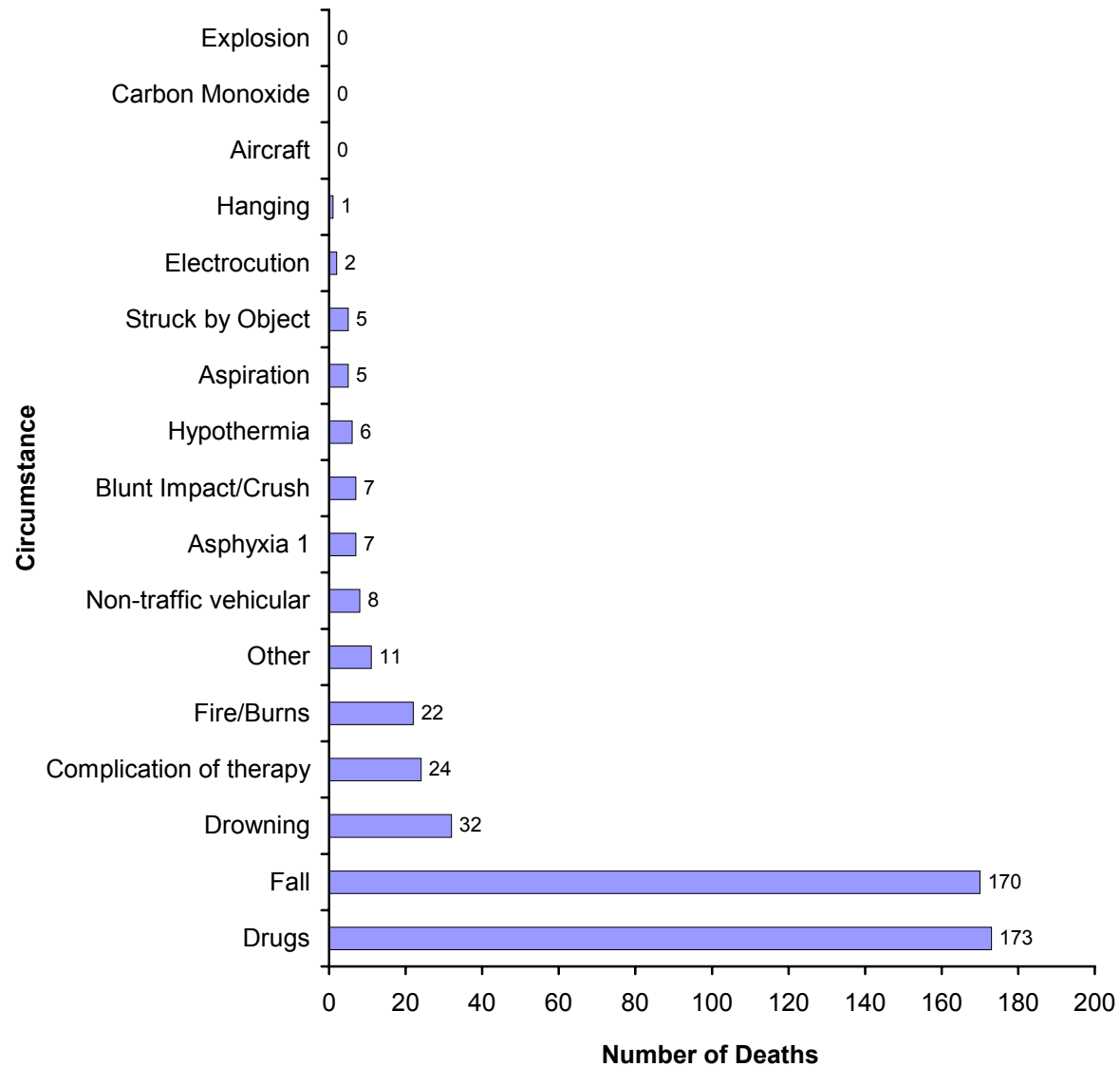
The second largest group of accidental deaths were those who died as a result of falls, 36% (170/472). Of the 170 deaths attributed to injury sustained in falls, 87% (148/170) occurred in the age group 60 years and over. A large percentage of these falls were ground-level falls in elderly individuals, which resulted in fractures leading to complications such as pneumonia.

Twenty-two (22) deaths resulted from fire or thermal injury, a decrease from 29 in 2001. Of the 22 fire-related deaths, 59% (13/22) were the result of accidents that occurred outside of King County. The injured were transported to Harborview Medical Center's Burn Unit where they died.

Another category of accidental deaths worthy of comment is death resulting from drowning. There were 32 drowning deaths in 2002 compared to thirty-five (35) drowning deaths in 2001, twenty-four (24) in 2000, and twenty-three (23) 1999. Three drowning victims were young children under 5 years of age. A significant number of drowning deaths among adults were likely precipitated by a cardiac event or seizure while bathing.

A comment is necessary to clarify the cause of death listed as "aspiration". This type of death results from a person choking on a foreign body, often a bolus of food while eating. In 2002 there were five (5) deaths due to aspiration of a foreign body compared the same number in 2001, and ten (10) deaths in 2000.

Of the 472 accidental deaths in 2002, 18% (86/472) were the result of incidents which occurred outside of King County, but the death took place within King County. These deaths were the result of the injured being transported from outside King County to medical facilities within the county where they died. Since these deaths occurred in King County, they come under the Medical Examiner's jurisdiction.

Graph 3-1 Circumstances of Accidental Death in 2002

¹ Note: The category "Asphyxia" includes mechanisms such as compressional asphyxia, positional asphyxia, and mechanical asphyxia including suffocation.

Table 3-1 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Race of the Decedent

CIRCUMSTANCES / GENDER	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER		
Aircraft Accident	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Asphyxia (compressional/suffocation/etc.)	5	0	1	1	0		7
<i>Male</i>	5	0	1	0	0	6	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Aspiration of foreign body	3	1	0	0	1		5
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	1	2	
<i>Female</i>	2	1	0	0	0	3	
Blunt Impact/Crushing	6	1	0	0	0		7
<i>Male</i>	5	1	0	0	0	6	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Carbon Monoxide	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Complication of therapy	21	1	2	0	0		24
<i>Male</i>	10	1	0	0	0	11	
<i>Female</i>	11	0	2	0	0	13	
Drowning	30	2	0	0	0		32
<i>Male</i>	25	2	0	0	0	27	
<i>Female</i>	5	0	0	0	0	5	
Drug	141	22	0	6	4		173
<i>Male</i>	102	15	0	4	3	124	
<i>Female</i>	39	7	0	2	1	49	
Electrocution	2	0	0	0	0		2
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Explosion	0	0	0	0	0		0
<i>Male</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fall	153	5	10	0	2		170
<i>Male</i>	81	4	7	0	2	94	
<i>Female</i>	72	1	3	0	0	76	
Fire/burns	19	2	0	1	0		22
<i>Male</i>	9	1	0	1	0	11	
<i>Female</i>	10	1	0	0	0	11	

**Table 3-1 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Race of the Decedent
(Cont..)**

CIRCUMSTANCES / GENDER	RACE					SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	WHITE	BLACK	ASIAN	NATIVE AMERICAN	OTHER		
Hanging	1	0	0	0	0		1
<i>Male</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hypothermia	5	0	0	1	0		6
<i>Male</i>	4	0	0	1	0	5	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Non-traffic vehicle	6	0	1	0	1		8
<i>Male</i>	5	0	1	0	1	7	
<i>Female</i>	1	0	0	0	0	1	
Struck by Object	3	0	1	1	0		5
<i>Male</i>	3	0	1	0	0	4	
<i>Female</i>	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Other	9	0	1	0	0		10
<i>Male</i>	7	0	0	0	0	7	
<i>Female</i>	2	0	1	0	0	3	
Total	404	34	16	10	8		472
Percent	86%	7%	3%	2%	2%		

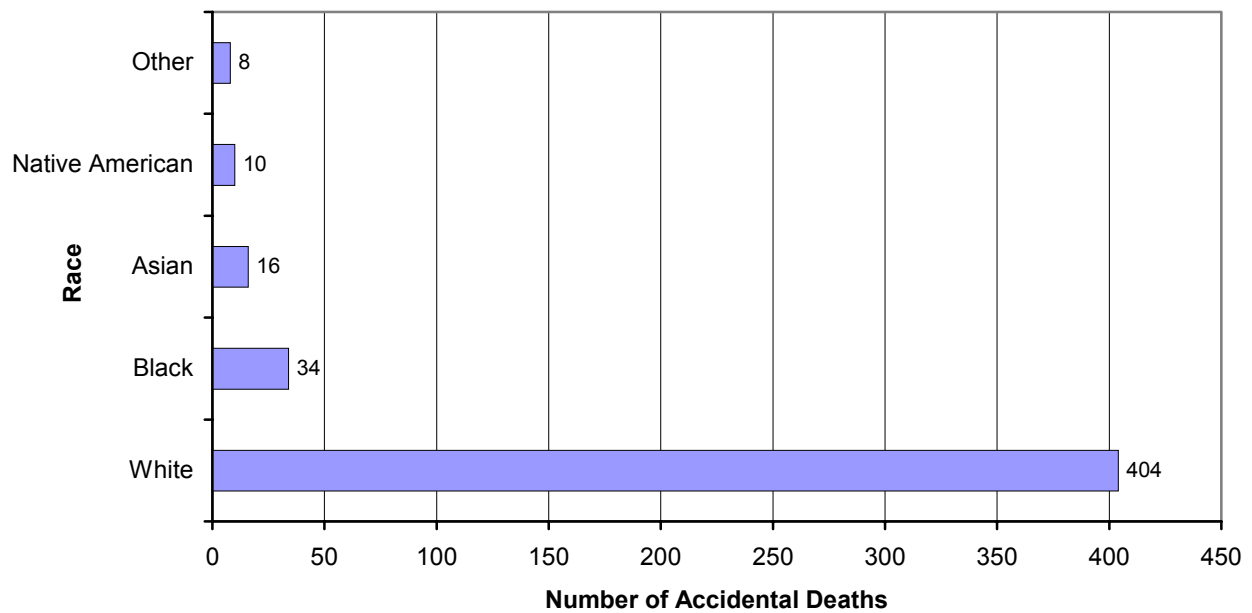
Graph 3-2 Accidental Deaths and Race of the Decedent

Table 3-2 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Age Group of the Decedent

Circumstances / Gender	AGE GROUP (YEARS)													SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	< 1	1 to 5	6 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +		
Aircraft Accident	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Asphyxia (compress/positional/ mech.)	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0		7
Male	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	6	
Female	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Aspiration of foreign body	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	0		5
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	
Female	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	3	
Blunt Impact/Crushing	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	3	0	0		7
Male	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	2	0	0	6	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	
Carbon Monoxide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Complications of therapy	1	0	1	0	1	1	3	1	7	5	1	3	0		24
Male	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	3	3	0	0	0	11	
Female	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	4	2	1	3	0	13	
Drowning	0	3	0	5	1	7	3	7	2	2	1	1	0		32
Male	0	1	0	5	1	7	2	7	1	2	0	1	0	27	
Female	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	5	
Drug	0	1	0	0	2	19	52	63	34	0	1	1	0		173
Male	0	0	0	0	1	15	41	45	21	0	1	0	0	124	
Female	0	1	0	0	1	4	11	18	13	0	0	1	0	49	
Electrocution	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		2
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Explosion	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Fall	0	1	0	0	2	2	3	8	6	15	40	63	30		170
Male	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	6	4	9	23	35	11	94	
Female	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	6	17	28	19	76	
Fire/burns	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	3	5	2	3	3	0		22
Male	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	2	2	0	11	
Female	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	3	1	1	1	0	11	

Table 3-2 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Age Group of the Decedent

Circumstances / Gender	AGE GROUP (YEARS)													SUB TOTAL	TOTAL
	< 1	1 to 5	6 to 12	13 to 15	16 to 19	20 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 to 59	60 to 69	70 to 79	80 to 89	90 +		
Hanging	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0		1
Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Hypothermia	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	1		6
Male	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0	5	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
Non-traffic vehicle	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	2	1	0	0	0	0		8
Male	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	7	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Struck by Object	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	0	0	0		5
Male	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	4	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
Other	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	1	1	2	1	0		10
Male	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	1	1	1	0	0	0	7	
Female	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	
Total	3	9	2	5	9	36	68	91	67	26	51	74	31		472
Percent	0.6	1.9	0.4	1.1	1.9	7.6	14	19	14	5.5	11	16	6.6		

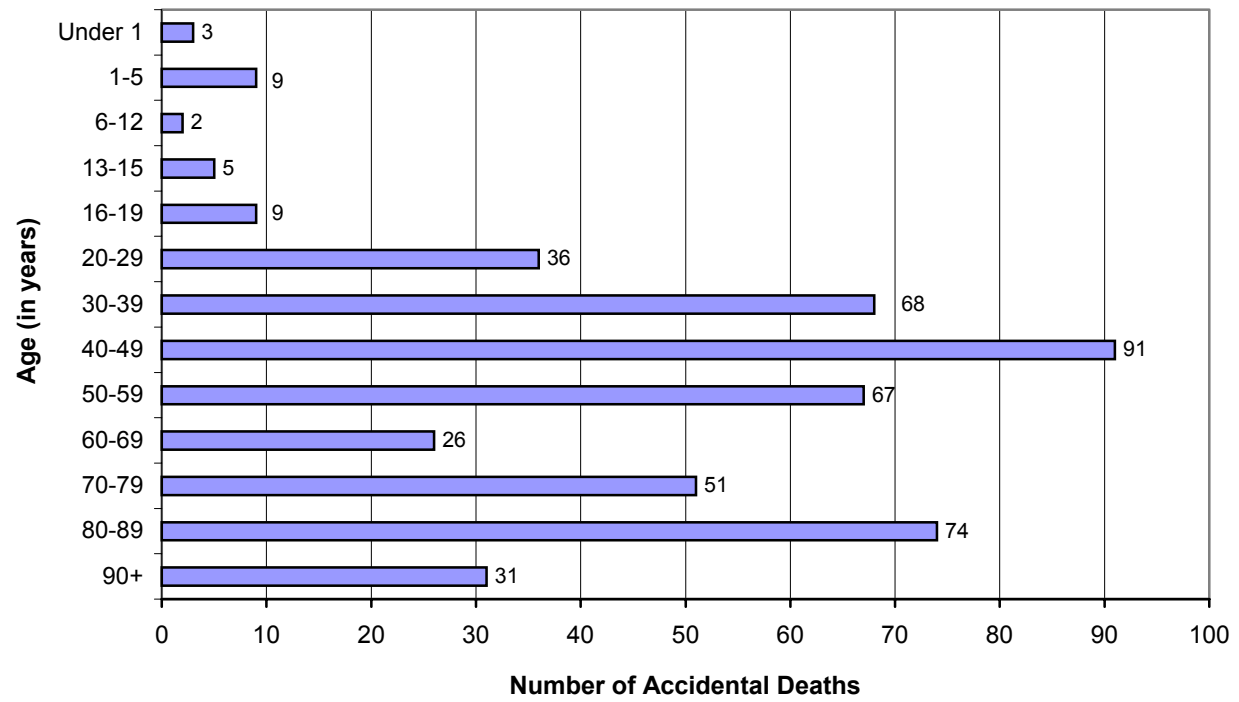
Graph 3-3 Accidental Deaths and Age Group of the Decedent

Table 3-3 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Gender of the Decedent

CIRCUMSTANCES	GENDER		TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	
Aircraft Accident	0	0	0
Asphyxia (compressional/suffocation/etc.)	6	1	7
Aspiration of foreign body	2	3	5
Blunt Force/Crushing	6	1	7
Carbon Monoxide	0	0	0
Complication of therapy	11	13	24
Drowning	27	5	32
Drugs	124	49	173
Electrocution	1	1	2
Explosion	0	0	0
Fall	94	76	170
Fire/burns	11	11	22
Hanging	1	0	1
Hypothermia	5	1	6
Non-traffic vehicle	7	1	8
Struck by object	4	1	5
Other	7	3	10
Total	306	166	472
Percent	64.8%	35.2%	

Table 3-4 Circumstances of Accidental Death and Blood Alcohol**Test Results of the Decedent**

CIRCUMSTANCES	TESTED		NOT TESTED	TOTAL
	TESTED POSITIVE	TESTED NEGATIVE		
Aircraft Accident	0	0	0	0
Asphyxia (compressional/suffocation/etc.)	0	6	1	7
Aspiration of foreign body	0	3	2	5
Blunt Impact/Crushing	0	3	4	7
Carbon Monoxide	0	0	0	0
Complication of therapy	0	8	16	24
Drowning	9	19	4	32
Drugs	59	102	12	173
Electrocution	1	1	0	2
Explosion	0	0	0	0
Fall	8	35	127	170
Fire/burns	5	10	7	22
Hanging	0	1	0	1
Hypothermia	1	5	0	6
Non-traffic vehicle	0	4	4	8
Struck by object	2	3	0	5
Other	0	6	4	10
Total	85	206	181	472
Percent	18%	44%	38%	